

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 DHAHRA 00549 131407Z

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 PA-02 PRS-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 ERDA-07 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

COME-00 EPG-02 DODE-00 FEAE-00 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07

INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 OES-07

SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-10 EPA-04 CEQ-01

/107 W

-----131435Z 101298 /43

O R 131323Z MAY 77

FM AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5424

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

RUQMHT AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USLO RIYADH

UNCLAS DHAHRAN 00549

3.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, CASC SA

SUBJECW: FIRE AT ARAMCO'S ABQAIQ FACILITY -- SECOND ARAMCO

PRESS RELEASE

REF: DHAHRAN 545

1. FOLLOWING IS PRESS RELEASE ISSUED MAY 13 BY ARAMCO TO SUPPLEMENT INFORMATION CONTAINED IN OIL COMPANY'S PRESS RELEASE OF MAY 12 (SEE FEFTEL) WHICH DISCUSSED FIRE AT ARAMCO'S ABQAIQ FACILITY:

2. QUOTE DHWRAN -- THE FIRE THAT BROKE OUT IN PART OF THE ABQAIQ PLANT AREA ON WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON HAS BEEN EXTINGUISHED EXCEPT FOR SMALL POCKETS OF BURNING CRUDE OIL IN  
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OVERFLOW DIKES, THE SPOLESMAN FOR THE ARABIAN AMERICAN

COMPANY (ARAMCO) SAID  
HERE TODAY.

3. SMALL POCKETS OF CRUDE STILL ON FIRE WILL BE ALLOWED

TO BURN THEMSELVES OUT AND POSE NO DANGER TO LIFE AND PROPERTY.

4. THE FIRE, CAUSED BY THE RUPTURE OF AN UNDERGROUND PIPELINE WHICH SPREAD OIL INTO PARTS OF THE PLANT AREA, CLAIMED THE LIFE OF ONE EMPLOYEE.

5. A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION HAS REVEALED THAT THE DAMAGE WAS MUCH LESS THAN ANTICIPATED AND HAS BEEN CONFINED TO ONE PUMP STATION, ONE GAS-OIL SEPARATOR SPHEROID AND CONNECTING GAS PIPELINE. ONE PUMP STATION WAS DESTROYED, THE ROOF OF ONE GAS-OIL SEPARATOR PLANT COLLAPSED, AND A NUMBER OF PIPELINES WERE RUPTURED. THE INVESTIGATION RULED OUT ANY POSSIBILITY OF SABOTAGE AS THE CAUSE OF THE PIPELINE RUPTURE AND FIRE.

6. SOME OF THE CRUDE OIL WHICH NORMALLY FLOWS INTO THE ABQAIQ PLANT AREA HAS ALREADY BEEN DIVERTED TO OTHER FACILITIES. WORK IS NOW UNDERWAY TO BYPASS THE DAMAGED FACILITIES WHICH WILL ALLOW ARAMCO TO RESTORE PRODUCTION LEVELS FROM THE SOUTHERN AREA WITHIN A FEW DAYS. END OF QUOTE.

7. COMMENT: FOREGOING WAS WRITTEN TO UPDATE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN ARAMCO'S PRESS RELEASE OF MAY 12 AND TO EXTINGUISH SPECULATION APPEARING IN FOREIGN NEWS THAT THE FIRE BROKE OUT AS RESULT OF AN ACT OF SABOTAGE. ARAMCO OFFICIALS POINT OUT THAT THE FACT THAT RUPTURE OCCURRED IN STRETCH OF PIPE BURIED UNDERGROUND SHOULD MAKE CLEAR TO EVEN THE UNIN-  
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INITIATED THAT FIRE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN CAUSED BY SABOTEUR EVEN IF HE COULD HAVE GAINED ENTRANCE INTO ARAMCO'S

FENCED-OFF AND CLOSELY GUARDED ABQAIQ FACILITY.

8. FYI: ARAMCO SOURCES BELIEVE ALL FIRES SHOULD BE EXTINGUISHED BY MAY 15, IF NOT BEFORE.  
POST IS ARRANGING FOR FULL BRIEFING OF SITUATION

ASAP AFTER FIRES ARE PUT OUT.  
BUSHNELL

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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